



Mill men: William Hanmann, left, owner of Hanmann Milling Co. in Casco, takes time out from work with

employee Elmer Seidl. The mill was built by Casco's founder, Edward Decker.

Affection for Casco runs deep

Village residents hope for industrial comeback

By Lisa Sumter

Press-Gazette

CASCO — Chester Majeski pointed proudly to the vibrant red and gold foliage on the horizon behind Holy Trinity Cemetery on a fall day.

"I don't think you'll find a more picturesque spot than you've got here today," he said with a smile.

Majeski's affection for this Kewaunee County village, about 20 miles east of Green Bay on Wisconsin 54, spreads beyond the scenery to a way of life. Fellow residents share his sentiment.

A village of about 530, Casco started as an Irish settlement in the mid-1800s, Majeski, N6519 County K, said.

When businessman Edward Decker came from Green Bay to live here in 1856, he found a mix of nationalities including Bohemians, Germans and French. Decker named the community after his birthplace — Casco, Maine. Historical accounts show he played a major role in developing Kewaunee County government.

Casco today is a bedroom community, with the majority of its residents working in Green Bay and Algoma. The village has more than a dozen businesses. Casco also is known for its apple and cherry orchards.

Majeski, a retired agriculture teacher at the old Casco High School and former village trustee, was instrumental in the consolidation of the Luxemburg and Casco school districts in 1968.

Press-Gazette photos
by Ken Wesely

From 1950-1975, job and housing opportunities were limited in Casco, so many of the village's young people moved away, Majeski said. But people who work in surrounding areas are able to stay in Casco now because of new housing developments.

"These are hard-working people here — no question about that," he said. "I think the community will continue to grow slowly, becoming more and more a bedroom community as we open up new areas for development."

Ernie Fameree, 410 Main St., wants industry to make a comeback in Casco. The village lost its main industry when Lake to Lake Cheese Co. closed its Casco operation in the 1970s. A village trustee and co-owner of Fameree's Red Owl Store, 410 Main St., he said a committee has been formed to attract and retain industry.

Fameree hopes such efforts will breathe life back into the village. He said Casco lost some identity when the high school moved to Luxemburg.

"I love this little village," he said.

Gail Hanmann, 306 Paul Ave., was raised on a farm and enjoys rural life in Casco, where she and her husband William own Hanmann Milling Co., 208 Church Ave.

"I think it's ideal for raising our family," she said. "You don't have the worries of the big city as much — the drugs,



Easy rider: Retired school teacher Chester Majeski leans back on riding lawnmower while cutting grass at Holy Trinity Church Cemetery.

the crime."

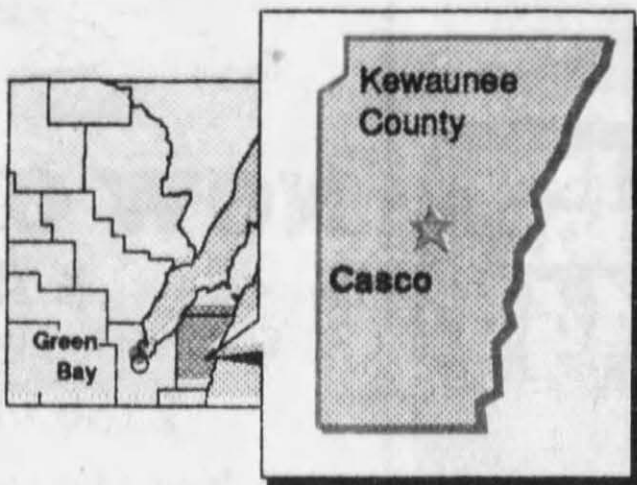
She said residents go to movies and shop in Green Bay. Her family's social life centers on school.

Sports fans are plentiful in Casco and Donna Lauscher, 312 Main St., must be among the most avid. Owner of Jim's Bar and Bowl, 312 Main St., with her husband Jim, she doesn't limit her love of sports to bowling.

She said she follows the Luxemburg-Casco Spartans wherever they go and can name the variety of championships they have claimed in recent years.

"Around here everyone's interested in high school sports," she said. "To me, that's the true sports."

■ **Next week:** Sampson in Oconto County



The Casco file

- **Pleasing picnic:** Casco is known for the Holy Trinity Catholic Church picnic held each summer. Funds raised support the church school. At one time it was the largest picnic in Northeastern Wisconsin, Chester Majeski says.
- **Versatile shop:** The building that houses Hanmann Milling Co. has had many uses. Owners say it was built as the publishing house for *National Magazine*, which ended up being printed in Boston. Later the building was a store, a railroad depot, a bank, a post office and a toy factory.
- **Party guy:** Residents say people came from miles around to parties at Edward Decker's massive home, known as The White House. Up to 40 people would stay overnight at the Casco landmark, which was destroyed by fire around 1963.